



**Opening Statement of Rep. Tim Walberg (R-MI)
Chairman, Subcommittee on Health, Employment, Labor, and Pensions
Hearing on “Worker-Management Relations: Examining the Need to
Modernize Federal Labor Law.”**

Good morning, and welcome to today’s subcommittee hearing. I would like to thank our panel of witnesses and our members for joining today’s important discussion.

Today we will examine the need to modernize certain federal workplace laws, including updates to policies within the *National Labor Relations Act* (NLRA) to strengthen the rights of workers to make free and informed decisions about whether they want to join or remain associated with a union.

We will also look at issues surrounding worker centers, and whether they are complying with relevant statutes under the *Labor-Management Reporting and Disclosure Act* (LMRDA) and if not, what updates need to be made in order to ensure transparency and accountability.

Worker centers were designed to be a resource in low-income communities; however, current ambiguities in the law have allowed them to engage in direct negotiations with employers on behalf of employees. The insufficient reporting standards currently in place limit the amount of information available to the Department of Labor and the public on just how many of these organizations currently exist and the types of activities they engage in with employers and employees.

Enacted in 1935, the NLRA guarantees most private sector employees the right to organize and bargain collectively with their employers through representatives of their choosing, or to simply refrain from such activities. While this remains the mission of the NLRA, the law is showing its age. Many of the law’s key provisions have not been updated since 1947, and it may be time to revisit the law to meet the needs of our 21st century workforce.

Additionally, the National Labor Relations Board—created through the NLRA—was designed to act as a neutral arbitrator to ensure a level playing field between employers and union leaders, but that hasn’t been the case in recent years. But more importantly, the NLRA and NLRB were designed to protect the right of workers to make fully informed decisions about whether they want to join a union

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In this hearing, we will also explore how union dues are being used for political activities that may not align with the beliefs of its members. We will further examine situations where employees are not afforded the protection of the secret ballot.

Congress has an obligation to examine how laws can be modernized in order to restore and uphold the rights of all workers.

I look forward to hearing from the witnesses on how we can ensure freedom of choice, restore balance and fairness, and help create an environment where workers and businesses can thrive.

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